794 distinguishes himself through diligence, obedience, and skill, he may
561 occasionally, if the elders so decide, be promoted to a more advanced age grade than his own and thus find himself on an equal footing with his elders.

794 The responsibilities of the Komo chief are considerable. He is the guardian of the altars which, as we shall later see, contain all the spiritual forces of the society; he is the only one able to manipulate them and is in charge of all the rituals which depend upon them. He
426 manages the patrimony of the group (seeds and money) which is kept in the cowrie or millet granaries, and which he may tap, in case of necessity, in order to make interest loans to members of the society who request them. (1)

1. See S. de Ganay, "Un jardin d'essai et son autel chez les Bambara /A Sample Garden and Its Altar among the Bambara/," Journal de la Société des Africanistes, Vol. 17 (1947), pp. 57-63.

But this function, honorary and advantageous from many points of view, involves not only rights but, more important, duties from which the chief cannot be exemated. He must, under no circumstances, abuse his power; he can make no decision without the agreement of the members and may not act, even in the most insignificant case, without advising each and every one of them. Each person is kept up to date as regarding the smallest details concerning the general activity of the Komo and the entire age grade must be informed at the same moment. To break these rules would mean to become exposed to the greatest dangers. Just like the head of the total family whose power is far from being absolute (2), the responsible person

794 614 2. "The Mandingo fa," says Henri Labouret, in Les Manding et leur langue, "appears less free in his acts and decisions than the master of the ancient taisible fraternity. Far from being the tyrannical and strong willed autocrat whom people have frequently taken pleasure in describing, he seems to me, rather, to fulfill therole of a delegated administrator,

787 This text determines the interpretation of the answer which will be given. The diviner next opens his hand, releases the pieces, and watches the way in which they fall on the ground: if they are arranged in the same way on the inner or outer sides, the answer is affirmative; it is negative.

Divination by Cowrie Shells

This practice is called: kolo nin fli, literally, "to throw the soul of the cowries." These shells are in no way different from those used for trade or ornamentation. Only one taboo is attached to the way in which they are acquired; they must not be bought or obtained without payment. To acquire them, the diviner must secure a loan called [426] kuma boli (literally, to come out of the word); he gives as surety a product or an object which will be reclaimed by him later when he returns the cowries.

The 22 cowries used summarize "that which is necessary to man" and are divided into three groups:

The first seven, teliko dɛ̀, sons of Téliko, represent the spirit of the air, Téliko and his children, as well as "the respiration" of men. In fact, it is said of them: "The Téliko spirits are the man's respiration" (1).

1. Teliko ye adamadɛ̀ ninakli kuma bo ye.

The next seven, faro dɛ̀, sons of Faro, symbolize human /219/ beings. One of them, chosen because it is easy to distinguish from the others, represents Faro; the diviner repeats the name of the spirit seven times over this shell before mixing it with the others, the effect being to give all of them the strength of the spirit.

The last eight, kumabana dɛ̀, sons of Koumabana, are the words of the eight great ancestors. One of them, different from the others, is called "mother of words." It is both Koumabana, first of the eight ancestors, and the unequaled word which he "spat" since Koumabana had known "all the words now existing on earth."

Thus 22, the expressions of the universe, summarize the human individual in the system of the 22 cowries: body and soul, Faro; breath and respiration, Téliko; revealed word, Koumabana. The division into three series, two of which are 7 and one 8, is also

794 his acolytes are exceedingly zealous in discovering wrong-
681 doings and the guilty parties and in requiring material proof of repentance, which they determine and try to multiply since they appropriate the whole profit, albeit abusively. Theoretically, these fines are not very heavy and are paid in kind (fowl, a goat, a dog, some kola nuts, millet, beer), but, when multiplied, they become a heavy burden for the debtor. He cannot evade this method of extortion, because his persecutors, in league against him, use every means, even criminal, to force him to pay.

794 Strictly speaking, all the property belongs to the nyana;
421 it is by rights the common property of the nyana-den' and in
426 principle is not to be privately appropriated nor alienated. It is to be used only for the needs of the cult, for assisting needy members, and in exceptional cases for loans to outsiders at exorbitant interest. For that matter, the nyana-den' who gets a loan from the common fund must repay it [261] as soon as his affairs take a turn for the better and, insofar as possible, add a certain amount in order to show his gratitude. It sometimes happens that an outsider is aided out of the common fund; this is a kind of charity which is both a good advertisement and extremely profitable.

794 The common property is not to be appropriated by any
421 dignitary or member of the brotherhood for his own benefit. Although there is certainly not a single native who is unaware of this regulation (1), it is all too evident that abuses have led

1. Raffenel writes (op. cit., p. 239): "The victims' flesh and other objects become the property of the poor."

to extraordinary perversions. The clergy regularly appropriates the property of the nyana to its own use, and in order to increase the profit, they do not hesitate to commit actual crimes that enable them to exploit the terror they inspire, which they are careful to nurture and to reinforce.

438 the gold. But they, in turn, could in no case resell the gold to any-
643 body other than the Fama. Aside from certain sacrificial uses and the
[648] making of jewels for the Fama's wives, gold served to ransom cap-
tives or to negotiate royal alliances.

435 The price of the commodities was set by agreement between
buyer and seller, except for cloth which had a fixed price, 100 cowrie
shells per cubit in the Bamako region. As a matter of fact, the cot-
[284] ton gathered in the fields of the community was woven by captives
who were not paid.

426 Loans were made without interest. Interest, korko, is still
686 forbidden today. Loans are guaranteed by labor. The debtor who
could not repay his debt on time and whose family head refused to
pay it for him was seized by the Fama and held as security until such
time as he had reimbursed his debt.

804 Side by side with French units of measurement, the natives
use their own for trade. Their measures of length: the cubit (elbow
to tip of middle finger), the span, the foot, the length of both arms
extended, the pace, the diare, and the kala . . . ; their measures of
capacity: the sawel or mouré, the mud; their weights: the moutkhal,
the catal, the large and little karoni, the wakie, the pellet of tali,
of tomi, of bagana, of gelen. Cotton is weighed on rough scales
whose pointer is a wooden rod and the balances large gourds hung by
strings. For weights, large rocks, kulu, from 800 to 1,200 grams are
[436] used. Finally, the Bambara use French money almost exclusively:
one franc of metropolitan France is equivalent to 0.50 francs C.F.A.
Nevertheless, the use of cowrie shells is still frequent.

d. Banks

453 One bank of issue exists in French West Africa: the Bank of
French West Africa. There are also private banks, the number of
which has increased during the past few years.

The Bank of French West Africa, which has a branch at Bamako,
carries out the following operations: [43]

1. discounts notes or bills of two or several signatures due in not
more than 180 days;

2. creates, negotiates, or buys drafts;

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565 3. the free men;

4. people of caste, such as blacksmiths, etc. (see below);

5. slaves.

567 e. Slavery. -- A man became a slave in three ways: by violence, by obligation, or by birth.

567 1. By violence. If a war captive is important, he may be killed or he may be held for ransom and treated with consideration.
727 A Fama captured in war could become an army chief or dignitary in
554 the country of his captor and could found a family there. In no case could he be reduced to captivity on his own territory.

[60] If the vanquished is a man of caste, he is spared captivity and generally enters the service of the conquering Fama;
[608] if he is a sénanku of the victor, the latter gets rid of him by freeing him. Finally, if the captive has the same name as the victorious
[561] Fama, he is freed, because he is recognized as being a relative of the Fama.

When the captive is a free man of humble origin, he is sold by the Fama, unless the Fama gives him to his warriors.

567 2. By obligation. A free individual became a slave in
681 punishment for his crimes or misdemeanors; he was then sold for the
426 profit of the Fama. A fa could sell one of his children to meet his
858 debts, but he subsequently had to try to buy him back once he was freed of his obligations.

567 3. By birth. A woman slave bears only slaves. The slave born in the house is called a wolo-so. If a woman slave is got with child by a free man, she becomes free, as does her child. But if the mother is repudiated, she reverts to slavery, while the child remains free.

567 As the number of slaves grew, their organization became
644 complicated and hierarchic. The slaves under the Fama of Ségou were divided into series, each having as chief the eldest of the slaves. The eldest of these chiefs became chief of the dyon-kuru or dyon-futu (ensemble of slaves). Monteil shows the important role this slave chief has played in the history of Ségou. In fact, he was the spokesman for all the grievances of the slaves and often became the Fama's adviser. At the death of the Fama, the slave chief confirmed the power of his successor by assuring him or refusing him, the submission of all the slaves.

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gnâma-n-kou or the na-yanka (I do not know the name of this plant), put to boil and soak in water. To make it effective, at least two kola nuts are offered to the fetish and five hens are sacrificed to it.

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of the staff, which lives off the altar. For the mere act of having killed a dog or a goat, of which they receive a good share of the meat, they get a fee consisting of a basket of sorghum (18 to 20 kilograms) and 1, 600 cowrie shells (about 2 francs).

Since initiates of the fetish are the only ones who can touch the corpse and lay it in its final home, they receive 8, 000 to 10, 000 cowrie shells (about 8 to 10 francs) on that score. At the end of the sangafo (3) the god's retinue go and sweep the hut of the deceased,

3. Sangafo, to go and offer condolences to the relatives of a deceased."

purify it with holy water, and drive out the last gnâma of the murdering Komo, and for this five fine hens are slaughtered. As payment for their trouble, the family also gives them five to six meters of cloth and 8 to 10 ba (4) (about 8 to 10 francs); 50 francs do not cover

[802]

4. A ba is worth 800 cowrie shells or about 1 franc. (The Bambara count by 40 and 80, and not by 50 and 100. 40, débé; 80, kémé.)

the cost.

Fortunately, the family does not bear all the expenses. Friends [43] help a little, and everyone brings his offering: from one person they get a /228/ hen, from another a débé (40 cowrie shells) or a kémé (80 cowrie shells). Nevertheless, they bear most of the cost, and [42] the fetishes are one of the chief reasons for that bonding of children (1)

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1. A bonded person works for his food, just like a slave. His condition is worse than that of the slave, for in addition to his food, the latter receives a bit of cloth to cover himself, but the bonded person does not. A slave can ransom himself for a sum varying between 100 and 200 francs, and at present he can escape without fear of being pursued and without paying anything at all. A bonded person must pay the amount of his bond to the last cowrie shell, whether he escapes or not. There are Negroes who, for a certain amount, will give you one of their children for one or two years. These children are not paid since the amount has already been paid, but besides food they get clothing and some gratuities beyond the payment for their work. Lacking the proper words, the Bambara call this also, "bonding" even though it is basically a real "domestic service." When the agreed time has passed, these young people go back to their homes without any payment being made. Even though the Negroes call this bonding, they make a distinction: a) slavery is a stigma which always remains; b) true bonding is a stigma that does not disappear unless the bonded person himself pays the price of his bonding; c) the bonding which is called "domestic service" does not involve any stigma; they are workers and not menial laborers.

4: Mersadier--17 U-5 (1954) 1955 MS37 Senegal MS37
Thies
SONINKE MS21
FULANI MS11
Wolof MS30
SERER FA32
TUKOLOR MS27
BAMBARA FA8

/399/

Table III

No.	Ethnic Group	Occupation	Income	Monthly Surplus or Deficit	% in Relation to Income
1	Sarakolé	Laborer	5,800	- 1,555	26.8
2	Peul	Orderly	6,100	- 1,642	26.9
3	Wolof	Laborer	6,500	- 416	6.4
4	Sérère	Laborer	6,700	- 3,034	45.2
5	Toucouleur	Orderly D. N.	6,745	- 1,237	18.3
6	Wolof	Mattress-maker	7,000	- 1,471	21.0
7	Wolof	Laborer	7,000	- 2,231	31.8
8	Wolofo	Orderly	7,410	- 1,124	15.1
9	Wolof	Baker	7,500	- 2,967	39.5
10	Wolof	Cultivator	8,150	- 1,641	20.1
11	Moor	Auxiliary D. N.	8,940	- 2,168	29.2
12	Peul	Laborer	9,000	- 1,593	17.5
13	Wolof	Laborer	9,800	- 1,614	16.4
14	Wolof	Cultivator	10,000	- 1,354	13.5
15	Bambara	Laborer	10,000	- 1,621	16.2
16	Bambara	Auxiliary	10,675	- 2,206	20.6
17	Moor	Auxiliary	10,800	- 2,306	21.3
18	Peul	Spec. laborer	11,000	- 1,758	15.9
19	Toucouleur	Accountant	11,950	- 2,418	20.2
20	Bambara	Auxiliary D. N.	12,000	- 2,582	21.5
21	Wolof	Clerk	13,000	- 3,579	27.5
22	Wolof	Auxiliary	14,000	- 1,488	10,6
23	Wolof	Cultivator	15,000	+ 452	3.0
24	Wolof	Cultivator	15,000	- 426	2.5
25	Wolof	Auxiliary	15,630	- 837	5.3
26	Wolof	Employee P. T. T.	15,800	- 529	3.3
27	Wolof	Shoemaker	16,200	+ 1,567	9.2
28	Wolof	Worker D. N.	22,000	+ 259	1.1
29	Toucouleur	Police sergeant	22,000	+ 286	1.3
30	Wolof	Weigher D. N.	24,000	+ 2,004	8.3
31	Wolof	Carpenter	25,000	+ 1,079	4.3

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BAMBARA FA8

/399/ Table III (cont.)

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No.	Ethnic Group	Occupation	Income	Monthly Surplus or Deficit	% in Relation to Income
32	Wolof	Cultivator	25,000	+ 1,442	5.7
33	Sérère	Chauffeur	25,000	+ 1,128	4.5
34	Wolof	Employee P.T.T.	25,900	+ 977	3.7
35	Wolof	Staff employee D.N.	27,000	+ 2,117	7.8
36	Wolof	Private accountant	34,000	+ 751	2.2
37	Wolof	Truck-gardener	36,000	+ 1,237	3.4
38	Wolof	Jeweler	50,000	+ 2,555	5.1
39	Sarakolé	Teacher	51,000	+12,894	25.2
40	Wolof	Staff worker	55,000	+ 2,494	4.5
41	Sarakolé	Head employee D.N.	55,500	+ 5,599	10.0
42	Bambara	Chief worker C.D.N.	56,000	+ 4,726	8.4
43	Wolof	Doctor	81,000	+ 847	1.0

S *511

/400 cont./ of supporting a second wife in another city on an income that is not very high. Nos. 36 and 43 have a lower percentage of surplus, but here we were able to get quite precise information on the utilization of the /401/ surplus and were able to include these sums in the total expenses.

S 178 *262 [369] [264]

It has become banal to state that the diet of Africans lacks variety. The food habits remain the most deep-rooted, and although one sees imported food products appear more and more among the African families of the cities, it is striking to verify that almost all are merely superimposed on the old ones. The food base, the meals at noon and in the evening, rarely evolves, no matter what the ethnic group, the income, or the